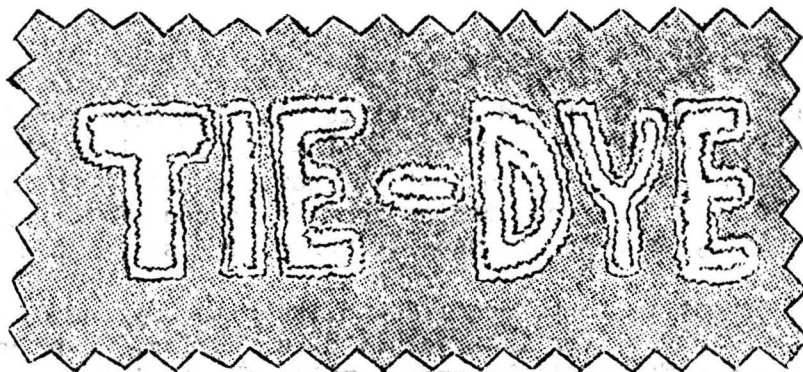


COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS  
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII, HONOLULU 14, HAWAII  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE COOPERATING  
DISTRIBUTED IN FURTHERANCE OF THE ACTS OF CONGRESS OF MAY 8 AND JUNE 30, 1914  
H. H. WARNER, DIRECTOR, HAWAII AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE



By Genevieve Feagin, Extension Clothing Specialist

TIE DYEING is an ancient art of dyeing fabrics, used by artisans in Japan, India, and the Philippines. One reason this method of dyeing continues to be popular is the variety of patterns that result. There is always an element of suspense in tie-dyeing for it is impossible to tell exactly what design effect will be produced until the ties are released and the cloth washed and opened out.

THE PRINCIPLE OF TIE DYEING is simply dyeing cloth after portions of the fabric have been wound and tied. The fabric absorbs the dye irregularly, resulting in a pattern when the ties are released. Once the basic method is understood, you can go on experimenting indefinitely for different patterns in design and color.

TIE-DYED FABRICS are used for many purposes, such as table linens, curtains, draperies, cushion covers, blouses, skirts, dresses, scarfs, and aprons. Fabrics of cotton, silk, rayon, and their mixtures are most often used for tie-dyeing. Lighter weight fabrics, such as muslin, cotton crepe, voile, batiste, crepe, and chiffon, more readily absorb the dye and are easiest to work with. Bleached feed, rice, or flour bags take on an altogether "new look" when tie-dyed.

The dyeing may be done either before or after the article is sewed. Cloth can be dyed more evenly, however, before it is made into garments. When dyeing is done before cutting or making, care should be taken to lay out the tie design and to plan for design details such as hems, pockets, ties, and belts, so that the pattern will be effective in the completed article.

#### SUPPLIES FOR TIE-DYEING

THE SUPPLIES NEEDED ARE: an enamel pot large enough to allow free stirring of the material; dye (all-purpose, or one that lists your fabric on the package); cord, string, or cloth tape; and a wooden stick.

### STEP 1. PREPARE THE MATERIAL

If old material is used, make sure it is clean and free of starch. Wash new material thoroughly to remove starch and sizing.

### STEP 2. PLAN YOUR DESIGN

Large, bold designs are quickest and easiest to tie, but more intricate designs will soon suggest themselves after you have made a few pieces. Keep the finished article in mind when tying the design so that the pattern will be balanced and in good proportion. All the rules for good design apply. Groups of threes and fives in color portions, stripes, or dots are usually more interesting than even numbers.

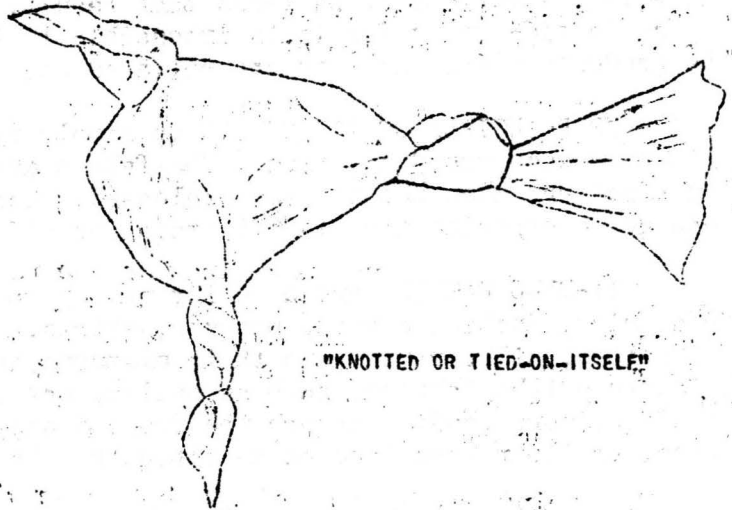
If the cut of the garment is to be complicated, keep the dyeing design simple; conversely, choose simple styles for intricately dyed fabrics. Mark guide lines and spacing of ties with a soft pencil before starting the tying.

### STEP 3. TIEING

The tying may be done in two ways: (1) knotted or tied-on itself and (2) tied with string or cloth tape.

- (1) KNOT or TIE the material on itself for a rather bold, broad design that is very effective for draperies and full skirts. Gather the cloth into your hands and tie it into knots at selected places as you would knot a rope.

This method makes a particularly pretty design if the material is first dyed one all-over color, then knotted and dyed another color. The knots leave large undyed portions.



"KNOTTED OR TIED-ON-ITSELF"

- (2) TIED WITH STRING OR TAPE: Pick up portions of the fabric and tie with cord, string, or cloth tape, more or less tightly. Infinite variety in the patterns will result by varying the methods; for example,

Tie very tightly to allow the least amount of dye to go through.

Tie loosely to allow more dye to go through.

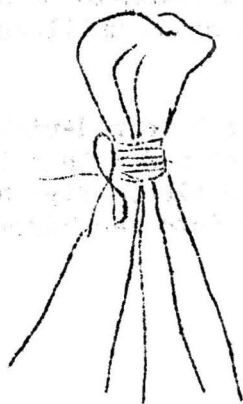
Wrap string or tape in different widths.

Gather at random, fold, or pleat the fabric in the hands before tying.

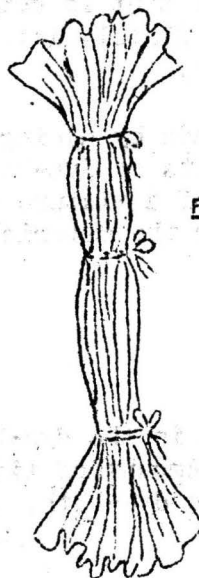
Put a marble, glass bead, pebble, or stick between the ties to spread the material out to absorb more dye.

Put in more or take out some ties during the dyeing process.

For very intricate designs, the Japanese have perfected a method in which the design is outlined with strong basting threads in even basting stitches, drawn very tightly and tied. This stitch-outlined portion can be kept almost completely out of the dye by wrapping it very tightly with cloth tape.



FOR DOT, ROSETTE OR  
CIRCLE PATTERNS -  
PICK UP CENTER,  
SQUEEZE CLOTH  
TOGETHER BELOW,  
AND TIE.



FOR STRAIGHT STRIPES:  
GATHER OR PLEAT MATERIAL  
ACROSS WITH FINGERS OR  
BASTING STITCHES, AND  
TIE.

#### STEP 4. PREPARE THE DYE-BATH

Follow instructions that come with the dye package for mixing the dye-bath and for dyeing shades and tints. Most packages contain enough dye for about three yards of material. However, some fabrics absorb more dye than others and some colors have more dyeing power than others. You can often obtain deeper shades on a yard or two and use the remainder for tints or pastels on another yard or two.

Enough water must be mixed with the dye to cover the fabric loosely and allow free stirring. The amount of water will not affect the dyeing power of the dye. The amount of dye powder used in proportion to the amount of material used and the length of time the material is left in the dye-bath determine the intensity of the color.

IF YOU UNDERSTAND THE COLOR WHEEL, you can mix dyes to get many other colors. Do this on a small scale first. Mix a cup or two of the two dyes in planned proportions and test with a scrap of the material to be dyed. Adjust proportions as desired to get a pleasing color. For example, approximately equal portions of red and blue will give violet, but if you want pink (a tint of red) with a hint of blue in it, mix a few spoons of blue dye-bath into a cup of the red and test. It is wise to measure the amounts used in the test so that the same proportions can be used in mixing the larger dyebath.

#### STEP 5. DYE, RELEASE TIES, AND RINSE

Thoroughly wet the fabric before putting it into the dye-bath. Put in and take out all pieces to be the same shade at the same time to assure matching colors for such parts as pockets, belts, and facings. Keep the material moving in the dye-bath to avoid streaking of the dye. Stir and turn it continuously. Lift from the dye-bath when the desired shade or tint is obtained. Remember that the color looks darker when it is wet. Put immediately into water, remove ties, and rinse until no color washes out into the water.

A pretty effect can be made by dyeing a COLOR BLEND, such as red to red-violet to violet. Prepare three pots of dye-bath--one of red, another of red with a little blue added, and a third of a mixture of equal parts of red and blue. Tie the spacing loosely or gather the material into one hand and stir into each dye-bath in turn.

#### TO DYE SHADES OF A COLOR

Put portion to be darkest in the dye-bath first, the medium shade in next, and the lightest shade in last. Amount of time to allow for each shade depends on the kind of fabric, strength of the dye-bath, and depth of shades desired.

*Genevieve Feagin*

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Extension Clothing Specialist